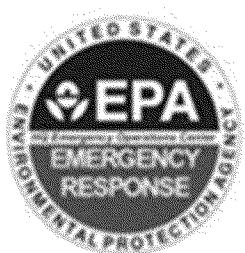


**To:** Eoc, Epahq[Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]  
**From:** Eoc, Epahq  
**Sent:** Tue 8/18/2015 11:17:33 PM  
**Subject:** EOC Spot Report Update #12: Regions 6, 8, and 9 Gold King Mine Release into Animas River; San Juan County, CO

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## **EOC Spot Report Update #12: Regions 6, 8, and 9 Gold King Mine Release into Animas River; San Juan County, CO**

**US Environmental Protection Agency**

**Report as of 1830 EDT on 08/18/2015**

### **Overview:**

On 8/5, an EPA and Colorado State Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety team was working to investigate and address contamination at the abandoned Gold King Mine in San Juan County, CO. A large release of mine wastewater into Cement Creek occurred while an EPA site assessment team was conducting site investigation activities. Initial estimates indicated that the release was approximately one million gallons that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. The estimate has since been revised to 3 million gallons. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach and all were unharmed. The release's path

flows through three of EPA's regions: Region 8—Colorado, Utah and the Southern Ute Tribe; Region 6--New Mexico; and, Region 9--Navajo Nation.

The La Plata County Sheriff opened the Animas River to recreational use on 8/14 with a health advisory from CDPHE. A Colorado State veterinarian has cleared water use for animals.

The Navajo Nation President's office held a meeting with Navajo EPA on Monday 8/17 to discuss neighboring states lifting of water advisories and reportedly evaluating a similar action by Navajo Nation. The President decided this morning to keep river restrictions in place today. He will reconsider daily depending on data and recommendations from Navajo EPA.

#### **State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions:**

The Region 8 Unified incident Command includes EPA, State of Colorado Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT), and La Plata County. The City of Durango, Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment CDPHE, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe are Agency Representatives. San Juan County is an Agency Administrator. The SUIT continues water delivery. As a proactive measure, the SUIT is installing reverse osmosis on tribal residential kitchen taps.

US Bureau of Reclamation (USBOR) is conducting road stabilization in and around the mine site.

EPA Region 8 is coordinating with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in response to public health concerns associated with the mine waste plume.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) measured increased river flows and provisionally calculated flow volume of approximately 3 million gallons discharged from the Gold King Mine.

#### **EPA Actions:**

*Response Organization:* EPA is integrated in Unified Command in Durango, CO and in three Incident Command Posts (ICPs) Durango, CO, Farmington, NM with a branch at Lake Powell (at the Arizona and Utah Border). Unified EPA Area Command is in Durango, CO with representatives from EPA Regions 6, 8 and 9. The Region 10 REOC activated on 8/14, to

support the Gold King and Typhoon responses.

The EPA continues to operate and work on optimizing four treatment and sedimentation ponds at the mine site which are treating water by lowering acidity levels and removing dissolved metals.

*Public Information:* A public-facing website has been set up for the response: <http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine>. EPA is reviewing sampling data and developing public messaging to include the development of a wider message that river conditions are returning to normal. Beginning 8/16, there will be two EPA Public Information Officers in Silverton, CO. A public event called "Durango is back – River and Bike Parade" has been scheduled for 8/18 to mark the re-opening of the Animas River.

Congressman Rob Bishop (and Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee) visited the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area on 8/17. This trip was scheduled prior to the Gold King Mine incident and it provided an opportunity for the NPS and EPA to provide an update. Senator Feinstein

has expressed an interest in obtaining the data and maps of the sampling being done by EPA on Navajo Nation. The Attorney Generals of Utah and Colorado are visiting the Gold King Mine site tomorrow.

Comprehensive Community Outreach continues with 5 Region 9 CICs in the Farmington ICP traveling daily to various Navajo Chapter Houses for scheduled meetings with local residents.

The call center has received 730 call as of 8/17.

Social Media Sites being maintained by the UC JIC through local and state resources are:

Blog – [goldkingminerelease.blogspot.com](http://goldkingminerelease.blogspot.com)

FB – [facebook.com/goldkingminerelease](https://facebook.com/goldkingminerelease)

Twitter - @GKMRelease

YouTube Channel – Gold King Mine Release

The blog has received just under 500 hits in the last 48 hours.

*Sampling and Data Review:* The HQ Environmental Unit (EU) continues to assist with data validation. Daily residential well sampling continues. On 8/18 EPA and CDPHE will be assessing the upper Animas River through the canyon. At the request of the City of Page, Arizona, EPA and START contractors sampled the drinking water intake in Lake Powell on August 17. A regional mobile laboratory unit arrived at the ICP on 8/15.

On 8/17/2015 CDPHE took their last sample of raw and finished water samples from public water supply systems in the impacted area. Public water systems will continue sampling according to their regular sample plans established by CDPHE.

Sediment sample data from irrigation ditch sediment sample data from August 13, 2015 was posted on 8/18.

*Water Delivery and Supply:* NMED informed EPA that the Town of Morningstar's reserve had dropped drastically and the Town only had an estimated 48 hours of available supply as of 8/14. Morningstar and Farmington completed the connection between their water systems. The pump works but the pipe separated in one section. System operators are working to repair the leak and will hopefully get the system back online later today.

Navajo Tribal Utility Authority has identified 13 locations for EPA storage and distribution of water for agriculture and livestock use. EPA continues providing over 16,000 gallons of water per day to each of these locations. NTUA is working on putting their water distribution lines back online so that delivery of water can be discontinued.

*Claims:* EPA has a claims process for compensating citizens who suffer personal injury or property damage caused by U.S. government actions. The process includes guidance on documentation that may be required to support claims for loss of employment and loss of income, among other claims. Region 8 has had inquiries about such claims from business owners in CO. A FAQ on the claims process was posted to <http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine> on 8/18.

A Disaster Assistance Center (DAC) was requested by La Plata County. The request was implemented by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) on 8/18 and 19). The EPA will be accepting claims at this event and CDPHE will also be present.

See previous reports for past EPA regional and HQ actions.

**Media Interest:** High

[http://www.denverpost.com/environment/ci\\_28647978/colorado-faces-230-mines-leaking-heavy-metals-into](http://www.denverpost.com/environment/ci_28647978/colorado-faces-230-mines-leaking-heavy-metals-into)

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/17/us/animas-river-colorado-mine-spill-epa.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/17/us/animas-river-colorado-mine-spill-epa.html?_r=0)

[http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci\\_28645132/epa-plans-water-treatment-system-gold-king-mine](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_28645132/epa-plans-water-treatment-system-gold-king-mine)

<http://dailysignal.com/2015/08/14/gold-king-mine-spill-the-epa-is-the-polluter/>

**The HQ EOC will continue to monitor and provided updates as needed.**

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